

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5153

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to strengthening families by allowing transfers between regional support networks to be closer to relatives or other strong personal supports.

Brief Description: Concerning transfers of clients between regional support networks.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, Carrell, Darneille, Pearson and Schlicher).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 3/14/13, 3/26/13 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill
(As Amended by Committee)**

- Requires the Regional Support Networks (RSNs) to adopt a uniform transfer agreement for the transfer of clients between the RSNs.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Jenkins, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Clibborn, Green, Harris, Manweller, Moeller, Morrell, Riccelli, Rodne, Ross, Short, Tharinger and Van De Wege.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services (Department) is the designated state mental health authority. The Department contracts with Regional Support Networks (RSNs) to oversee the delivery of mental health services for adults and children who suffer from mental illness or severe emotional disturbance. An RSN may be a county, group of counties, or a nonprofit or for-profit entity. There are currently 11 RSNs in Washington. Ten of these are

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either single or multi-county authorities and there is one private entity operating as an RSN in Pierce County. The RSNs contract with local providers to provide an array of mental health services, monitor the activities of local providers, and oversee the distribution of funds under the state managed care plan.

Through a federal waiver, Washington has implemented a managed care system for both outpatient and inpatient mental health services under the Medicaid program. Under this system, the Department provides capitated payments to the RSNs to provide mental health services to clients within their geographic regions and the RSNs assume the financial risk for providing the care to those clients.

The RSNs also receive grants to provide services to non-Medicaid clients. These funds are not an entitlement and are only provided according to available resources. The distribution of non-Medicaid funding for the RSNs is based primarily on population.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Regional Support Networks (RSNs) must jointly develop a uniform transfer agreement for the transfer of clients between the RSNs and submit the agreement to the Department of Social and Health Services (Department) by September 1, 2013. The Department must establish guidelines to implement the uniform transfer agreement and make any necessary modifications to avoid impacts on state administrative systems by December 1, 2013.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:

The amended bill eliminates the requirement that the Department of Social and Health Services (Department) adopt rules and procedures for the transfer of clients between Regional Support Networks (RSNs). The requirement that the rules and procedures be added to contracts with the RSNs is eliminated.

The RSNs must develop a uniform transfer agreement and submit it to the Department by September 1, 2013. The Department must establish guidelines to implement the agreement and modify it to avoid impacts on state administrative systems by December 1, 2013.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill will help people with mental illness be closer to family members to receive the support that a family environment can provide. Family support is the most critical thing for a person with mental illness; however, the current mental health system is not set up to keep people close to their families.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor; and Michele Morgan.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.